REMARKS

In the Official Action, claims 1-4 and 6-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over the Gloger reference (U.S. No. 6,838,980) and further in view of the Shuman reference (Pat. Pub. No. US 2003/0065432). It is submitted that claims 1, 11, 16, and 21 as amended overcome this rejection and thus patentably distinguish over the proposed combination of references.

With this Amendment, the limitations of claims 2, 9, and 10 have been incorporated into independent claim 1 with claims 2, 9, and 10 being cancelled. In particular, claim 1 now recites the controller having a process-determining module, which determines that the detected object is a previously unclassified object and/or requires an updated classified object. If one of these two conditions is satisfied, then the process-determining module actuates the object classifying module to classify the object within a predetermined category and update the object classification list. Conversely, in the Shuman reference, the system described therein classifies an object only on the condition that the object has not been previously identified by the system. In this respect, in one cycle of operation, the Shuman system may identify an object yet fail to classify that object. It will be appreciated that a relatively low-powered processor, which analyzes a high number of objects in one cycle, may identify an object yet lack sufficient power and/or time within the cycle for classifying that object. In that case, the Shuman system may detect the same object again in a later sensing cycle, determine that the object has been previously identified, and thus bypass a classification subroutine for that object even though it has not yet been classified. However, with the applicant's invention, the inventive system classifies all objects that have not been previously classified by the system. Thus, the claimed system can include a low-powered inexpensive processor for classifying all objects and rapidly updating a classification list for the vehicle safety system.

Claim 11 has been amended to include the limitations recited in cancelled claim 9. Namely, in claim 11, the inventive method includes the step of determining that the identified object requires an updated classification. Put another way, the controller determines that a detected object already has been assigned a classification and that the existing classification is outdated On the other hand, the Shuman system classifies an object only when that system

determines the object was not previously identified. This criterion is substantially different from the claimed limitation and thus fails to teach or suggest the same.

By this Amendment, claim 16 recites the step of determining either that the object was not previously classified or that the object requires an updated classification. As detailed above, none of the cited art, when taken individually or in any permissible combination, teach or suggest these claimed steps.

Claims 21 as amended now includes the limitations recited in cancelled claim 26. Specifically, claim 21 recites the controller executing a classification subroutine when the object is omitted from the object classification list.

In view of the foregoing, all of the claims remaining in the case, namely claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 11-25 and 27, are in proper form and patentably distinguish from the prior art. Accordingly, allowance of the claims and passage of the application to issuance are respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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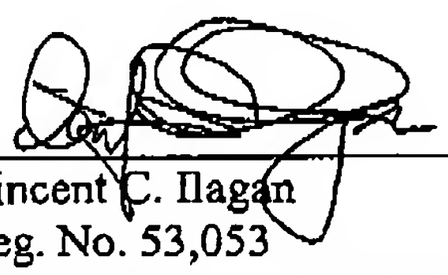

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